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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 28, 2009

Summary: All newspapers highlighted as their lead story, Defense Secretary Gates' remarks before the Senate panel that "U.S. would continue drone strikes inside FATA and has conveyed the decision to Pakistan." Also front-paged were reports that "President Zardari sought the help of international community for stopping the U.S. from carrying out drone attacks inside Pakistan." Reports on President Obama's interview with Al Arabiya TV network telling the Muslim world that "Americans are not your enemies" was also prominently displayed. All dailies gave coverage to the activities of former President Musharraf's engagements in the U.S. including his address at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia and his interview to CNN. Ambassador Patterson's meeting with the NWFP Chief Minister Hoti in Peshawar was prominently covered. Also highlighted were reports that Pakistan and the U.S. signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support the Pakistan's clean drinking water project.

Most newspapers ran editorials on the Vice President Biden's reported remarks about the continuation of drone attacks inside Pakistan. The second-largest Urdu daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt," questioned "will the armed forces continue to wait for government's order if the government does not fulfill its responsibility of defending the country due to expediency?" The English daily, "The Nation," noted that "it is clear from Vice-President Biden's statement that President Obama lays greater stress on assuring the American people that he can go on fighting the War on Terror, rather than on bringing it to an end." The rightist English daily, "Pakistan Observer," wrote: "The statement of the Vice President implies that the nature, scale and intensity of attacks would increase and even ground attacks cannot be ruled out. This effectively means escalation of the tension, destabilization of the region and creating more difficulties for the new democratic Government in Pakistan." End Summary.

News Stories

"Decision Conveyed To Islamabad; Drone Attacks To Continue: Gates"
"Dawn" (01/28)

"U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates told a U.S. Senate panel on Tuesday that the United States would continue drone strikes at suspected terrorist targets inside FATA and has conveyed its decision to the government of Pakistan."

"Pakistan Seeks World Help" "Daily Times" (01/28)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday sought the international community's help for stopping the United States from carrying out drone attacks inside Pakistan. The President told foreign Ambassadors at a dinner that Pakistan had joined the anti-terror war for its own security but the U.S. drone attacks were proving detrimental to its efforts."

"Parliamentary Body Wastes Its Breath On Drone Attacks" "The News" (01/28)

"The Parliamentary Committee on National Security in Islamabad on Tuesday condemned the U.S. drone attacks in the tribal areas and demanded of the new American government to stop violation of the Pakistan's airspace."

"Obama Asked To Halt Drone Attacks In Pakistan" "The News" (01/28)

"A group of Pakistani-American organizations urged U.S. President Barack Obama to pursue a 'partnership of peace' with Pakistan that should begin with respect for 'statehood and sovereignty' of its longtime South Asian ally."

"Pakistan Should Exploit U.S. Missile Strikes; Analysts Say Expectations Of Policy Change Unrealistic" "Daily Times" 01/28)

"Pakistan should stop protesting against United States missile strikes in its territory and instead focus on extracting concessions for what it sees as a violation of sovereignty, analysts said.... Political analysts stress that expectations of a policy change are unrealistic despite Washington's appointment of a new special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan."

"We Cannot Afford A Dictator Who Makes Peace Agreements With Taliban: President Obama" (Jang) (01/28)

"U.S. President Barack Obama has said that the U.S. will have to change its policies regarding Pakistan. 'The U.S. cannot afford a dictator and grant him hundreds of thousands of dollars that makes peace agreements with Taliban,' added the U.S. President in a message for a dialogue program on Geo News TV. U.S. former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, General (R) David L. Grandige, Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee's Chairman Mushahid Hussain, former Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri, and Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Babar Awan also participated in the digital video conference between Islamabad and Washington."

"Pak Army's Tolerance For U.S. Raids Decreasing; IISS Says Strikes Harming Zardari's Position" "The Nation" (01/28)

"U.S. strikes against Taliban and Al-Qaeda targets in the tribal areas of Pakistan risked undermining the position of President Asif Ali Zardari, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). 'To effectively pursue the campaign on terror, he will need to balance growing U.S. pressure for military strikes in the tribal areas with the Pakistani Army's decreasing tolerance for such attacks,' the British defence think-tank said in its annual 'Military Balance 2009' survey of armed forces around the world, released on Tuesday."

"Afghanistan, Pakistan Bear The Brunt of Bombings; Iraq No More Main Target" "Dawn" (01/28)

"A significant shift in the incidence of suicide bombing has taken place away from Iraq and towards Pakistan and Afghanistan over the last three years, according to a newly published report by 'Combating Terrorism Centre,' an independent research institute at the West Point military academy in the U.S."

"Troops Launch Fresh Operation In Swat" "Daily Times" (01/28)

"The authorities have imposed an indefinite curfew in the main city of Swat, said a statement by the army's media centre in the valley on Tuesday - hours after the security forces launched the third phase of a military operation in the valley."

"Two More Schools Blown Up In Swat" "The News" (01/28)

"As security forces intensified the operation in Swat, the Maulana Fazlullah-led militants on Tuesday blew up two more boys schools in

Kabal. Official sources put the number of the torched or destroyed schools at 188, most of them girls schools."

"Swat Turmoil - Taliban Courts Prove State Failure: HRCP" "Dawn" (01/28)

"The summoning of politicians and citizens to Sharia courts in Swat is further testimony to the absence of the states' writ and the growing boldness of militants, says the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan."

"16 Militants Killed In Darra" "Dawn" (01/28)

"Security forces have claimed killing more than 16 militants in Darra Adamkhel on Tuesday."

"Five Drones Intrude Into NWA" "The News" (01/28)

"Five American CIA-operated spy planes on Tuesday intruded into the North Waziristan Agency and flew over various villages of the restive border area. The flights of drones in such a large number over the tribal region terrified the already-panicked tribesmen, especially women and children."

"Obama Extends Diplomatic Hand To Muslim World" "The Daily Times" (01/28)

"U.S. President Barack Obama told the Muslim world that 'Americans are not your enemy,' as he urged Israelis and Palestinians to return to the negotiating table and offered a diplomatic hand to Iranian leaders if they 'unclenched their fist.' In an interview with the Al Arabiya satellite television network on Monday, Obama also renewed his pledge to travel to make an address in the capital of a major Muslim nation."

"Dr. Khan Hero Of Common Man; Musharraf Says U.S. Must Force India To Resolve Kashmir Issue" "The Post" (01/28)

"Former president Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday underlined that undoubtedly nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan is a hero of common man in Pakistan and any action against him would need considerable thought. Former president expressed these views during his address at Franklin Institute in Philadelphia.... "

"Probe Report To Be Shared With India Soon, Says Zardari" "Dawn" (01/28)

"President Asif Ali Zardari said on Tuesday that India would be informed in two to three days about the report of a preliminary investigation prepared on the basis of information provided by the Indian government in connection with the Mumbai attacks."

"Pakistan To Respond To Indian Dossier On 29th" "The News" (01/28)

"Pakistan is expected to respond to the Indian dossier on the Mumbai attacks on Thursday after wrapping up its investigation, extending the earlier deadline set by it to complete the probe by two days. A local TV channel quoted an official source as saying that Malik had extended the deadline for completing the probe till January 29."

"Doubts Over Indian Claims About Foiling Militant Attack On Delhi" "Dawn" (01/28)

"Doubts have been raised about police reports of a foiled attack on India's capital blamed on Pakistani militants, with newspapers wondering if the whole episode might have been staged. The controversy is an unwelcome distraction from India's efforts to bring to book Pakistanis it blames for November's attack on Mumbai."

"U.S. Envoy Calls On NWFP Governor, CM" "Daily Times," "The Statesman" (01/28)

"U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson called on NWFP Governor Owais Ahmed Ghani at the Governor House, Peshawar on Tuesday to discuss ways to bring positive changes to the affected people. Patterson, in a meeting with NWFP Chief Minister (CM) Ameer Haider Khan Hoti at the CM's Secretariat on Tuesday, assured the

government of unfettered support to the affected."

"U.S. And Pakistan Sign MOU To Support Clean Drinking Water" "The News," "Daily Times," "The Nation," "The Frontier Post," "The Statesman" (01/28)

"The United States Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Pakistan's (GOP) Ministry of Special Initiatives, on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support the Pakistani Government's Clean Drinking Water Project."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Raza Rabbani's Remarks And Joe Biden's Announcement," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (06/24)

"U.S. Vice President has talked of accelerated action against Al Qaeda and Taliban.... Will the armed forces continue to wait for government's order if the government does not fulfill its responsibility of defending the country due to expediency?"

"No Change With Obama," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/28)

"It is clear from Vice-President Biden's statement that President Obama lays greater stress on assuring the American people that he can go on fighting the War on Terror, rather than on bringing it to an end.... A more balanced view would provide for the adoption of a more nuanced approach, particularly leaving Pakistani forces to act on intelligence received. Pakistan should also abandon its present posture, and go on the diplomatic offensive with reference to the killings by the Americans in the tribal areas, and play its due role in exposing the real face of the Obama Administration."

"Joe Biden Humiliates Pakistan," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/28)

"So far the attacks were limited to pilotless drones but the statement of the Vice President implies that the nature, scale and intensity of attacks would increase and even ground attacks cannot be ruled out. This effectively means escalation of the tension, destabilization of the region and creating more difficulties for the new democratic Government in Pakistan. In normal diplomatic parlance the tone of the threat amounts to declaration of war against Pakistan."

"Swat's Solution: A Wholehearted Operation," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/28)

"During a debate in the National Assembly on the situation in Swat, the Interior Secretary had said that the government only has two options: either hand over Pakistan to the Taliban or fight them to protect the country. Those who challenge the writ of an elected government and try to set up a parallel government should not be spared at all; there cannot be two views about it. The solution lies in fighting them. The government is taking suitable measures in this regard but these efforts need to be intensified."

"Truth And Dare," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/28)

"Militants control almost all of Swat valley, including much of the principal town of Mingora. There seems to be no evidence, despite the interior adviser's claims, that the militants are being driven back or even that a comprehensive strategy is in place to achieve this. Indeed, the hold of the militants seems firmer than ever."

"Wanted By Taliban Courts," an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (01/28)

"It bears repetition that insurgency in Swat is not of the type that is rife in tribal areas adjacent to the Pak-Afghan border: it is entirely home-grown, patterned more on the valley's own historical movements than Afghanistan-centric militancy in the FATA. Whatever

the truth in claims of foreign interference the fact cannot be denied that militancy in Swat draws sustenance largely from domestic politics and happenings, including the unfortunate Lal Masjid incident."

"D.I. Khan Bomb Blast," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/28)

"The unexplained incident is an example of the regular, almost constant violence that we now live amidst. There seems to be no escape from it. There have as yet been few studies of the impact this violence has on people. The fact is though that fear is now a part of life. Everywhere, people tend to avoid public places that they believe could be targeted by terrorists. The kinds of lives we lead have changed."

"Bane Of Sectarian Violence," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/28)

"The Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, which claimed the killing of the Quetta leader, is one such example of how sectarianism grew blatantly under the benign patronage of the state. It is a pity that governments of the day, by relying on the crutches of religion, failed to anticipate the outcome of their flawed approach. Sectarianism was inevitable when obscurantists were appeased and given a free rein to preach violence. The need of the hour is that the government cracks down forcefully on banned religious groups before their violence spills into neighboring states and others compel us to act."

"A Case Of Multi-Directional Terror," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/28)

"Just as an element of Pakhtun nationalism within the Taliban movement is killing people in Afghanistan along with the citizens of Pakistan, Baloch nationalism threatens to cross the border and give E Iran a casus belli. Again, the likely reaction from the neighbor will not indict Pakistan directly but plead Pakistan's incapacity to look after itself to infiltrate Pakistani territory. Therefore those who think in Pakistan that Islamabad has isolated itself by accepting to participate in the war against terrorism led by the United States should look closely at where Pakistan's multidirectional terrorism is leading it."

"U.S. Pro-India And Anti-Pakistan Policy," an editorial note in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/28)

"President Obama in his message to Indian people on their Republic Day said that no country could be a better friend of theirs other than the United States. Also, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden has said that the U.S. will not desist from attacking inside Pakistan if they found Al-Qaeda targets.... President Obama's liking for India, and the veiled message of Mr. Biden have exposed the U.S. designs more clearly."

"Obama's Disappointing Start," an op-ed by Mazhar Qayyum Khan in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/28)

"The stoppage of drone attacks and the exchange of intelligence about the movement of militants have been among the longstanding demands of the government here. Their disregard by Washington hurts not only the sensitivities of the people of Pakistan on the issue of territorial sovereignty but also the Americans' own interests."

"Afghanistan Security Not Without The Taliban," an op-ed by Nasim Zehra in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/28)

"In the flow of events, which included the tragedy of 9/11 and Washington's devastating military attack on Afghanistan to punish the Taliban and Al Qaeda for the 9/11 terrorist attacks, men like Washington's Zalmay Khalilzad and the UN's Lakhdar Brahimi crafted a document, but not for power-sharing among Afghanistan's major political-military groups. They, instead, prepared a victor's

will--indeed, Washington's--which sought to ensure that the-then pro-Washington Afghan groups will exert full control over the vanquished, the Taliban.... It is most unlikely that credibility, security or peace will return to Afghanistan if the current approach of no genuine power-sharing arrangement with the Taliban will be worked out."

"End The U.S. Romance Before It Destroys Us," an op-ed by Shireen M. Mazari in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/28)

"The hard reality is that the U.S. is going to become an increasingly hostile state towards Pakistan under Obama. So it is time to alter course. We need to renegotiate the entire cooperation with this new U.S. administration, keeping in mind the now-established Indo-U.S. strategic partnership. We need to find our own means of countering the drone attacks-rather than helplessly waiting for U.S. goodwill."

"A Climate Of Change," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/28)

"Welcome words were heard on Monday as U.S. President Barack Obama outlined his policy on tackling climate change and reducing his country's dependency on imported oil. Until recently the laggard among industrialized nations on environmental issues, the U.S. under Mr. Obama promises a clean break from the policies of his predecessor.... Mr. Obama's stance is more clear-cut: it will be the interest of the American people and the welfare of the planet, not the influence wielded in Washington by lobbyists that will hold centre stage in his scheme of things."
Patterson